



Arizona Department of Education
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal

For Immediate Release
October 3, 2011

CONTACT: Andrew LeFevre
602-542-5072
andrew.lefevre@azed.gov

Arizona Department of Education Kicks-Off Eleventh Annual Transition Conference on Behalf of Exceptional Students

***Over 800 Students, Parents, Educators, and Service Providers From Across Arizona Gather to
Support Transition Planning Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities***

Scottsdale, AZ, October 3, 2011— Today, over 800 students, parents, educators, and service providers from around the state are gathering in Scottsdale for the Arizona Department of Education's Eleventh Annual Transition Conference. Attendees will participate in professional development opportunities supporting the provision of effective transition planning opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities. This year's theme, *Imagine It, Plan It, Do It!* reflects the energy and creativity of children and young adults in determining their plans for adulthood.

"It is always a pleasure to join with students, parents, service providers and top educators from around the state to learn about how we can improve opportunities for our neediest students as they transition into an active and fulfilling adult life," said Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal.

Arizona's annual transition event showcases current and innovative perspectives from local, state, and national leaders to assist stakeholders in developing tools and strategies that will lead to positive adult lives for youth and young adults with disabilities. Participants will choose from over 95 breakout sessions covering topics from the following strands: Community Partnerships; Family Voice; Special Education in Secure Care Facilities (adult & juvenile corrections, adult & juvenile county detention facilities); Career & Job Development; Accessing Community Resources/ Medical & Social Empowerment; Youth/Young Adult Empowerment; and Curriculum & Instruction.

In addition to the 25 national presenters participating in the conference, attendees will hear from the nationally recognized keynote speaker Rick Lavoie. Mr. Lavoie is a nationally known educator, motivational speaker, author, and an acclaimed advocate for children with learning disabilities and special needs. His numerous national television appearances include *The TODAY Show*, *CBS Morning Show*, *Good Morning America*, *ABC Evening News*, and *Walt Disney Presents*. He is probably best known for his video documentary, *How Difficult Can This Be? The F.A.T. City Workshop*, a documentary that created a mock environment where viewers could experience the frustration, anxiety, and tension of being a learning disabled child.

"This three day conference is about bringing together the best and brightest of our educational leaders in one place to create a dynamic learning environment," said Huppenthal. "The ideas that they share at this conference will have a dramatic impact on their students for years to come."

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